## SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY CHILDREN'S NETWORK

# Policy Council Minutes February 25, 2004

### **Members/Representatives Present:**

- Mandi Batalo, County Library
- Carol Anselmi, HSS Administration
- Sandra Baxter, County Counsel
- Cathy Cimbalo, Department of Children's Services
- Bruce Davis, 3<sup>rd</sup> District Board of Supervisors Representative
- Gerald Farber, Public Defender
- Jim Felten, Department of Public Health
- Eric Frykman, Department of Public Health
- John Kochis, District Attorney's Office
- Terry Kramer, Department of Behavioral Health
- Don Larkin, First 5 San Bernardino
- Joyce Lewis, Department of Behavioral Health
- Rudy Lopez, Department of Behavioral Health
- Susan Melanson, Children's Network
- Warren Nobles, Sheriff's Department
- Kent Paxton, Children's Network Officer
- Mel Rinewalt, Probation Department
- Paula Roby, Department of Behavioral Health
- Ed Rowe, Children's Network
- Claudia Spencer, Department of Public Health
- Rebecca Stafford, Children's Fund
- Honorable Rex Victor
- Kathy Watkins, HSS Legislation & Research
- Julian Weaver, County Schools
- Ray Wingerd, Probation Department
- Roberta York, Preschool Services Department
- John H. Hortly, Grand Jury
- Supervisor Dennis Hansberger
- Rafael Contreras, Grand Jury
- R. J. Wilkiln, Grand Jury
- Lois Long, Grand Jury
- Tammy Williams, Children's Network

The meeting of the Children's Network Policy Council was called to order at 12:05 p.m. and convened by Honorable Rex Victor in the Citrus Room, fifth floor, County Government Center.

#### 1.0 Welcome and Introductions

Honorable Rex Victor welcomed those present and self-introductions were made.

## 2.0 Approval of Agenda

A motion was made to approve the amended agenda as read.

## 3.0 Approval of January Minutes

The January 28, 2004 minutes were approved as submitted.

#### 4.0 Information Items

# 4.1 Children's Fund Report

- Rebecca Stafford reported last week the Children's Fund Board approved \$15,000 for the Juvenile Court playroom and waiting area.
- The Children's Fund Board has approved to fund some of the Perinatal Leadership Team activities such as: April visit by Dr. Ira Chasnoff and Rich McGourty, and Dr. Ira Chasnoff's visit in September as the keynote speaker for the annual Children's Network Conference.
- Rebecca invited everyone to attend the Duck Race Kickoff on March 2<sup>nd</sup> at 11:30 a.m. at the County Government Center. There will be good food and lots of excitement.

## 4.2 Ray Wingerd

- Kent Paxton presented Ray Wingerd with a recognition plaque. Kent mentioned he was thankful to work on a variety of projects with Ray over the years and admires his organizational vision for youth not to be looked at as only juvenile offenders, but includes other agencies that can assist the juvenile offenders to be better productive citizens. Ray has looked at a variety ways throughout the years that will achieve the best outcomes for these youth and will truly be missed.
- Ray mentioned working throughout his county employment as Chief Probation Officer and Deputy Probation Officer he felt confident working on problems because of the collaboration is so terrific in this county. Ray mentioned he would miss working with this group.

• Ray invited everyone to his retirement party being held at the San Bernardino Elks Club on March 24<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 p.m.

### 4.3 School Linked Services

- Julian Weaver announced the School Linked Services Committee just met last week on the Resource Directory they are putting together for school personnel.
- The group had taken a break due to the impending budget
- Lots of the resource information they had gathered over the last 1-1/2 years has changed, so they are in the process of updating the directory.
- Action: Julian will present the draft School Linked Services Directory for your review at the March 24<sup>th</sup> Policy Council meeting.
- Action: Policy Council members will review the document for accuracy and get changes to Julian, so that a final copy can be distributed at the April meeting.

### 5.0 Discussion/Action Items

- 5.1 Child Abuse Prevention Month Resolution: Action is Requested to recommend to the Board of Supervisors that April 2004 be declared Child Abuse Prevention Month in San Bernardino County
  - Susan Melanson referred everyone to Draft Resolution proclaiming April as Child Abuse Prevention Month.
  - The Resolution will be presented at the Annual Shine the Light on Child Abuse Awards Breakfast rather then at a future Board of Supervisors meeting.
  - Action: A motion was made to approve the resolution as presented. Supervisor Hansberger was asked to forward the document to the other Supervisors for their approval.
  - The Annual Shine the Light on Child Abuse Awards Breakfast is March 31<sup>st</sup> at 7:30 a.m. at the Ontario Double Tree.
  - Susan had tickets available for \$10 and encouraged all to attend and RSVP, as last year we had well over 500 in attendance.
  - Please contact Children's Network Office to reserve your seat at (909) 387-8966.

- Julian Weaver was selected as the Lifetime Advocate, please come and help honor him.
- The mass distribution of child abuse prevention materials will be distributed in March and April.
- Susan suggested calling the Children's Network office any time during the year, when you need child abuse prevention materials to take out into the community.

# **5.2** Group Home Policy:

- (A) Group Home Legislation
- (B) Large Facility Visit Outcomes
- (C) HSS Group Home Outcomes Research
- (D) Group Home Policy: Letters of Support
  - Kent Paxton mentioned there is several items related to the Group Home Policy he wants to bring back to this group for discussion.
  - The last two letters of recommendation for support were declined and would have been located in the 4<sup>th</sup> Supervisoral District.
  - Kent mentioned he wanted to see discussion today around: the group home needs assessment survey; the possibility to develop an annual RFP to go out for group home providers; better quality and supervision of children placed in group homes; contract monitors of group homes; and how group home placements impact the child welfare redesign outcomes.
  - Kent referred everyone to the attachments in their agenda packets.
  - Kent also referred everyone to the handouts from Kathy Watkins: County Sponsored Group Home Bill and Analysis of Placement Outcomes Between DCS Children Placed in Small Versus Large Group Homes.
  - Kathy Watkins stated they are in negotiations with CCL (Community Care Licensing) to access to their database in order to see what complaint calls they have on file for group homes in San Bernardino County.
  - The county should probably set a threshold for the number of complaint calls and have the group home come in and discuss the corrective plan of action.
  - Kathy Watkins stated the annual group home needs assessment survey will be mailed out this week and will include some additional questions such as: Does the group home have a good neighbor policy; follow-up on incident reports; and the inclusion of Riverside County as the perspective of Inland Empire placements.

- Kathy stated that the placement social workers would not be surveyed this time as Cathy Cimbalo now has a Centralized Placement Unit, which has up-to-date data on placements.
- Kathy mentioned that they are conducting an analysis of children placed in small group homes versus large group homes going back to placements in 2000 the handouts give further details, such as (children placed in small group homes of 6 beds or less tend to have better outcomes than those placed in large group homes).
- Bruce Davis made the following observation; it appears that children placed in family like small group homes do better, so why place them in larger group homes? The first choice is relative and then it dictates by the child's behavior and medical needs? Apparently, the RCL (Rate Classification Level) varies by the number of beds?
- Kent mentioned he and Bruce Davis went to visit three group home facilities (Hill view in Chino Hills; Child help in Beaumont; and the Trinity C.E.O. in Colton) in January and asked the questions noted in your agenda packets as 5.2b.
- Kent mentioned that Vision Quest would be opening 144 beds on Friday, February 27<sup>th</sup> with half of the beds allocated to Probation.
- Cathy Cimbalo mentioned that they have gone out for a second time on an RFP (Request for Proposal) for an 80-bed short-term facility, but they have not had anyone interested.
- Cathy Cimbalo mentioned there are demands through the family-to-family initiative to keep children placed in the same school district, churches and neighborhood, when possible so that the children have better placements.
- Bruce Davis made the observation about the larger group home providers have facilities with buffer zones as they are not typically located in a neighborhood setting, where as the 6 bed cottage type style group homes are in neighborhoods.
- Cathy Cimbalo talked about a large placement facility in San Diego that houses grades 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> with approximately 250 children. The model works there, as there is lots of community support.

- Julian Weaver stated the legislation AB 490 covers placement issues for foster children and levels of education that is very in-depth. Action: Julian Weaver will give an in-depth presentation at the March meeting on what AB 490 is.
- Kent Paxton talked about the current policy on existing group homes and letters of support used by new group homes and group homes increasing their RCL (Rate Classification Level).
- There was further discussion about developing an RFP process that would apply the same standards for all the existing group homes.
- Kent Paxton asked for direction from the Policy Council in what action to take, when new group home providers want to open their new business. One issue is there are currently 1,000 group home beds in San Bernardino with 700 children placed in group homes.
- Supervisor Hansberger asked does AB 490 dictate placements of children nearest to their school district or relative?
- Cathy Cimbalo stated usually the initial placement of a child is not in a group home, but with a relative or foster parent. She stated the location for placements depends on the child's' therapeutic needs and application of the legislative requirements.
- Sandra Baxter mentioned that the Juvenile Court does keep in mind what is in the child's' best interest as far as placements are concerned.
- Supervisor Hansberger mentioned that he has to keep in mind what the constituents want in their neighborhoods as far as group homes are concerned.
- Supervisor Hansberger mentioned he would support a larger facility in Hesperia.
- Judge Victor stated with his experience in court he has seen some of the worst cases. With his experience he has seen the best progression of placements for children are: first place with relatives; second place with foster parents; and third place in a small group home setting.
- Kent Paxton made a suggestion that the existing group homes need to be better utilized.
- Supervisor Hansberger mentioned that maps need to be looked at where the current group homes exist and how they impact local schools, law enforcement, and the neighborhoods.

- There was further discussion about the large number of group homes in Rialto, possibly due to lower property costs.
- Action: Kent suggested in April the issues of AB 490 will be on the agenda for further discussion as well as the program design of a placement facility for 16 to 21 year olds like Jerry D.
- 6.0 Other
- No comment
- 7.0 Public Comment
  - No comment
- 8.0 Next Meeting: March 24, 2004

Respectfully Submitted,

Tammy Williams, Children's Network Policy Council Recording Secretary

/tgw